

# A D V I C E

ADDRESSED TO THE

YOUNG CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF CARLISLE,

IN A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT A GENERAL ORDINATION HOLDEN.  
AT ROSE-CASTLE,

ON SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1781.

BY WILLIAM PALEY, M. A.

CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT REV. EDMUND LORD  
BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

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1 TIM. iv. 12.

LET NO MAN DESPISE THY YOUTH.

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THE Author of this epistle with many better qualities, possessed in a great degree, what we at this day call a *knowledge of the World*. He knew that, although age and honours, authority of station and splendor of appearance, usually command the veneration of mankind, unless counteracted by some degrading vice, or egregious impropriety of behaviour; yet, that where these advantages are wanting, where no distinction can be claimed from rank, importance from power, or dignity from

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years; in such circumstances, and under the inevitable depression of narrow fortunes, to procure and preserve respect requires both care and merit. The apostle also knew, and in the text taught his beloved convert, that to obtain the respect of those amongst whom he exercised his ministry, was an object deserving the ambition of a Christian teacher, not indeed for his own sake, but for theirs, there being little reason to hope that any would profit by his instruction who despised his person.

If *St. Paul* thought an admonition of this sort worthy of a place in his epistle to *Timothy*, it cannot surely be deemed either beside or beneath the solemnity of this occasion, to deliver a few practicable rules of life and behaviour, which may recommend you to the Esteem of the people, to whose service and salvation you are now about to dedicate your lives and labours.

In the first place, the stations which  
you



you are likely, for some time at least, to occupy in the church, although not capable of all the means of rendering service and challenging respect, which fall within the power of your Superiors, are free from many Prejudices that attend upon higher preferments. Interfering interests and disputed rights; or where there is no place for dispute, the very claim and reception of legal dues, so long as what is received by the minister is taken from the parishioner, form oftentimes an almost insuperable obstruction to the best endeavours that can be used to conciliate the good-will of a neighbourhood. These difficulties perplex not *you*. In whatever contests with his parishioners the *principal* may be engaged, the *curate* has neither dispute nor demand to stand between him and the affections of his congregation.

Another, and a still more favourable circumstance in your situation is this; being upon a level with the greatest part of your parishioners, you gain an access

to their conversation and confidence, which is rarely granted to the superior clergy, without extraordinary address and the most insinuating advances on their parts. And this is a valuable privilege; for it enables you to inform yourselves of the moral and religious state of your flocks, of their wants and weaknesses, their habits and opinions, of the vices which prevail, and the principles from which they proceed; in a word, it enables you to study the distemper before you apply the remedy; and not only so, but to apply the remedy in the most commodious form, and with the best effect; by private persuasion and reproof; by gentle and unsuspected conveyances in the intimacy of friendship and opportunities of conversation. To this must be added the many occasions, which the living in habits of society with your parishioners affords you of reconciling dissentions, healing animosities, administering advice to the young and inexperienced, and consolation to age and misery.

misery. I put you in mind of this advantage, because the right use of it constitutes one of the most respectable employments not only of our order, but of human nature; and leaves you, believe me, little to envy in the condition of your superiors, or to regret in your own. It is true, that this description supposes you to reside so constantly, and to continue so long in the same parish, as to have formed some acquaintance with the persons and characters of your parishioners; and what scheme of doing good in your profession, or even of doing your duty, does not suppose this?

But whilst I recommend a just concern for our reputation, and a proper desire of public esteem, I would by no means flatter that passion for praise and popularity, which seizes oftentimes the minds of young clergymen, especially when their first appearance in their profession has been received with more than common approbation. Unfortunate success!

if it incite them to seek fame by affectation and hypocrisy, or lead, as vanity sometimes does, to enthusiasm and extravagance. This is not the taste or character I am holding out to your imitation. The popular preacher courts fame for its own sake, or for what he can make of it; the sincerely pious minister of Christ modestly invites esteem, only or principally, that it may lend efficacy to his instruction and weight to his reproofs; the one seeks to be known and proclaimed abroad, the other is content with the silent respect of his neighbourhood, sensible that *that* is the theatre upon which alone his good name can assist him in the discharge of his duty.

It may be necessary likewise to caution you against some aukward endeavours to lift themselves into importance, which young clergymen not unfrequently fall upon; such as a conceited way of speaking, new airs and gestures, affected manners, a mimicry of the fashions, language,  
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and diversions, or even of the follies and vices of higher life; a hunting after the acquaintance of the great, a cold and distant behaviour toward their former equals, and a contemptuous neglect of their society. Nothing was ever gained by these arts, if they deserve the name of arts, but derision and dislike.—Possibly they may not offend against any rule of moral probity; but if they disgust those with whom you are to live, and upon whom the good you do must be done, they defeat not only their own end, but, in a great measure, the very design and use of your vocation.

Having premised these few observations, I proceed to describe the qualities which principally conduce to the end we have at present in view, the possession of a fair and respected character.

And the first virtue (for so I will call it) which appears to me of importance for this purpose, is *frugality*. If there



be a situation in the world in which profusion is without excuse, it is that of a young clergyman who has little beside his profession to depend upon for his support. It is folly—it is ruin.—Folly, for whether it aim at luxury, or show, it must fall miserably short of its design. In these competitions we are outdone by every rival. The provision which clergymen meet with upon their entrance into the church is adequate in most cases to the wants and decencies of their situation, but to nothing more—To pretend to more, is to set up our poverty not only as the subject of constant observation, but as a laughing-stock to every observer. Profusion is ruin: for it ends, and soon too, in debt, in injustice, and insolvency. You well know how meanly, in the country more especially, every man is thought of who cannot pay his credit; in what terms he is spoken of—in what light he is viewed—what a deduction this is from his good qualities, what an aggravation of his bad ones—what insults

sults he is exposed to from his creditors, what contempt from all. Nor is this judgment far amiss. Let him not speak of honesty, who is daily practising deceit; for every man who is not paid is deceived. Let him not talk of liberality, who puts it out of his power to perform one act of it.—Let him not boast of spirit, of honour, of independence, who fears the face of his creditors, and who meets a creditor in every street. There is no meanness in frugality: the meanness is in those shifts and expedients, to which extravagance is sure to bring men. Profusion is a very equivocal proof of generosity. The proper distinction, is not between him who spends and him who saves; for they may be equally selfish; but between him who spends upon himself, and him who spends upon others. When I extol frugality, it is not to praise that minute parsimony which serves for little but to vex ourselves and teize those about us; but to persuade you to *economy upon a plan*, and that plan

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deliberately

deliberately adjusted to your circumstances and expectations. Set out with it, and it is easy; to retrieve, out of a small income, is not impossible. Frugality in this sense, we preach not only as an article of prudence, but as a lesson of virtue. Of this frugality it has been truly said, that it is the parent of liberty, of independence, of generosity.

A second essential part of a clergyman's character is *sobriety*. In the scale of human vices there may be some more criminal than drunkenness, but none so humiliating. A clergyman cannot, without infinite confusion, produce himself in the pulpit before those who have been witnesses to his intemperance. The folly and extravagance, the rage and the ribaldry, the boasts and quarrels, the idiotism and brutality of that condition, will rise up in their imaginations in full colours. To discourse of temperance, to touch in the remotest degree upon the subject, is but to revive his own shame.

For you will soon have occasion to observe, that those who are the slowest in taking any part of a sermon to themselves, are surprizingly acute in applying it to the preacher.

Another vice, which there is the same together with many additional reasons for guarding you against, is *dissoluteness*. In my judgment, the crying sin and calamity of this country at present, is licentiousness in the intercourse with the sexes. It is a vice which hardly admits of argument or dissuasion. It can only be encountered by the censures of the good, and the discouragement it receives from the most respected orders of the community. What then shall we say, when they who ought to cure the malady, propagate the contagion ! Upon this subject bear away one observation, that when you suffer yourselves to be engaged in any unchaste connexion, you not only corrupt an individual by your solicitations, but debauch a whole neighbour-

bourhood by the profligacy of your example.

The habit I will next recommend as the foundation of almost all other good ones, is retirement. Were I required to comprize my advice to young clergymen in one sentence it should be in this, learn to live alone. Half of your faults originate from the want of this faculty. It is impatience of solitude which carries you continually from your parishes, your home, and your duty; makes you foremost in every party of pleasure and place of diversion; dissipates your thoughts, distracts your studies, leads you into expence, keeps you in distress, puts you out of humour with your profession, causes you to place yourselves at the head of some low company, or to fasten yourselves as despicable retainers to the houses and society of the rich. Whatever may be the case with those, whose fortunes and opportunities can command a constant succession of company, in situations like



like ours to be able to pass our time with satisfaction alone, and at home, is not only a preservative of character, but the very secret of happiness. Do what we will, we must be much and often by ourselves; if this be irksome, the main portions of life will be unhappy. Besides which, we are not the less qualified for society, because we are able to live without it. Our company will be the more welcome for being never obtruded. It is with this, as with many pleasures, he meets with it the ofteneft, and enjoys it the best, who can most easily dispense with the want of it.

But what, you say, shall I do alone? reading is my proper occupation and my pleasure, but books are out of my reach, and beyond my purchase. They who make this complaint are such as seek nothing from books but amusement, and find amusement in none but works of narrative or imagination. This taste, I allow, cannot be supplied by any moderate  
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expence or ordinary opportunities: but  
 apply yourselves to study; take in hand  
 any branch of useful science, <sup>!especially</sup>  
 of those parts of it which are subsidiary  
 to the knowledge of religion; and a few  
 books will suffice; for instance, a com-  
 mentary upon the New Testament read so  
 as to be remembered, will employ a great  
 deal of leisure very profitably. There is  
 likewise another resource, which you  
 have forgot, I mean the composition of  
 sermons. I am far from refusing you the  
 benefit of other men's labours; I only  
 require that they be called in not to flatter  
 laziness, but to assist industry. You find  
 yourself unable to furnish a sermon every  
 week, try to compose one every month:  
 depend upon it you will consult your own  
 satisfaction, as well as the edification of  
 your hearers; and that however inferior  
 your compositions may be to those of  
 others in some respects, they will be better  
 delivered, and better received; they will  
 compensate for many defects by a closer  
 application to the ways and manners, the  
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actual thoughts, reasoning and language, the errors, doubts, prejudices and vices, the habits, characters, and propensities of your congregation, than can be expected from borrowed discourses—at any rate you are passing your time virtuously and honourably.

With retirement I connect reserve; by which I mean, in the first place, some degree of delicacy in the choice of your company, and of refinement in your pleasures. Above all things keep out of public houses—you have no business there—your being seen to go in and out of them is disgraceful—your presence in these places entitles every man who meets you there, to affront you by coarse jests, by indecent or opprobrious topics of conversation—Neither be seen at drunken feasts, boisterous sports, late hours, or barbarous diversions—Let your amusements, like every thing about you, be still and quiet and unoffending. Carry the same reserve into your correspondence  
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with your fuperiors. Purfue preferment, if any profpects of it prefent themfelves, not only by honourable means, but with moderate anxiety. It is not effential to happinefs, perhaps not very conducive--were it of greater importance than it is, no more fuccefsful rule could be given you, than to do your duty quietly and contentedly, and to let things take their courfe. You may have been brought up with different notions, but be affured, that for once that preferment is forfeited by modefty, it is ten times loft by intrufion and importunity—Every one fympathifes with neglected merit, but who fhall lament over repulfed impudence?

The laft expedient I fhall mention, and in conjunction with the others a very efficacious one towards engaging refpect, is ferioufnefs in your deportment, efpecially in difcharging the offices of your profeflion. Salvation is fo awful a concern, that no human being, one would think, could be pleafed with feeing it, or  
any



any thing belonging to it, treated with levity. For a moment, in a certain state of the spirits, men may divert themselves, or affect to be diverted, by sporting with their most sacred interests ; but no one in his heart derides religion long—what are we—any of us?—religion will soon be our only care and friend. Seriousness therefore in a clergyman is agreeable, not only to the serious, but to men of all tempers and descriptions. And seriousness is enough : a prepossessing appearance, a melodious voice, a graceful delivery, are indeed enviable accomplishments ; but much, we apprehend, may be done without them. The great point is to be thought in earnest. Seem not then to be brought to any part of your duty by constraint, to perform it with reluctance, to go through it in haste, or to quit it with symptoms of delight. In reading the services of the church, provided you manifest a consciousness of the meaning and importance of what you are about, and betray no contempt of  
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your duty, or of your congregation, your manner cannot be too plain and simple. Your common method of speaking, if it be not too low, or too rapid, do not alter, or only so much as to be heard distinctly. I mention this, because your elocution is more apt to offend by straining and stiffness, than on the side of ease and familiarity. The same plainness and simplicity which I recommend in the delivery, prefer also in the style and composition of your sermons. Ornaments, or even accuracy of language, cost the writer much trouble, and produce small advantage to the hearer. Let the character of your sermons be truth and information, and *a decent particularity*—Propose one point in one discourse, and stick to it; a hearer never carries away more than one impression—disdain not the old fashion of dividing your sermons into heads—in the hands of a master, this may be dispensed with; in your's, a sermon which rejects these helps to perspicuity, will turn out a bewildered rhapsody, without aim or effect,

effect, order or conclusion. In a word, strive to make your discourses useful, and they who profit by your preaching, will soon learn, and long continue to be pleased with it.

I have now finished the enumeration of those qualities which are required in the clerical character ; and which, wherever they meet, make even youth venerable, and poverty respected ; which will secure esteem under every disadvantage of fortune, person, and situation, and notwithstanding great defects of abilities and attainments. But I must not stop here : a good name, fragrant and precious as it is, by us only valued in suberviency to our duty, in subordination to a higher reward. If we are more tender of our reputation, if we are more studious of esteem than others, it is from a persuasion, that by first obtaining the respect of our congregation, and next by availing ourselves of that respect, to promote amongst them peace and virtue, useful knowledge

knowledge and benevolent dispositions, we are purchasing to ourselves a reversion and inheritance valuable above all price, important beyond every other interest or success.

Go then into the vineyard of the gospel, and may the grace of God go with you. The religion you preach is true. Dispense its ordinances with seriousness, its doctrines with sincerity—urge its precepts, display its hopes, produce its terrors—“be sober, be vigilant”—“have a good report”—confirm the faith of others, testify and adorn your own, by the virtues of your life and the sanctity of your reputation—Be peaceable, be courteous; condescending to men of the lowest condition—“apt to teach, willing to communicate,” so far as the immutable laws of truth and probity will permit, “be every thing unto all men, that ye may gain some.”

The world will requite you with its esteem. The awakened sinner, the enlightened saint—the young whom you  
have

have trained to virtue, the old whom you have visited with the consolations of Christianity, shall pursue you with prevailing blessings, and effectual prayers. You will close your lives and ministry with consciences void of offence, and full of hope.—To present at the last day even one recovered soul, reflect how grateful an offering it will be to *him*, whose commission was to save a world—infinately, no doubt, but still only in degree, does our office differ from *his*—himself the first born, it was the business of his life, the merit of his death, the council of his Father's love, the exercise and consummation of his own, “to bring many brethren unto glory.”

FINIS.





